

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 00501 260827Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3895

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TAGS: PGOV PINT DA  
SUBJ: DANISH ELECTIONS: THE NUTS AND BOLTS

REF: COPENHAGEN 420

1. AS WE WAIT FOR THE DANES TO GO TO POLLS IN GENERAL  
ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, IT MIGHT  
BE USEFUL TO GO OVER THE GROUND OF SOME OF THE  
PROCEDURES SURROUNDING THE ELECTIONS IN ORDER

TO UNDERSTAND BETTER THE MILIEU IN WHICH THEY  
WILL BE CONDUCTED.

2. PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN, IN ASKING THE  
QUEEN TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT AND SCHEDULE NEW ELECTIONS,  
AVAILABLE HIMSELF OF A TECHNIQUE MOST RECENTLY USED BY  
HIS PREDECESSOR, LIBERAL PRIME MINISTER POUL HARTLING  
IN DECEMBER 1974. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE NOT BEEN  
DEFEATED BY A VOTE OF NO-CONFIDENCE OR ON AN IMPORTANT  
QUESTION. JORGENSEN SIMPLY ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS  
UNABLE TO OBTAIN SUFFICIENT PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT FOR  
THE FOUR-ELEMENT LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE HE CONSIDERED  
CRITICAL. THIS MEANS THAT HIS GOVERNMENT REMAINS IN  
OFFICE WITH FULL POWER AND LEGITIMACY ALTHOUGH BY  
TRADITION NO IMPORTANT NEW INITIATIVES WILL BE TAKEN.  
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IF, AS EXPECTED, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ARE RETURNED  
AS THE LARGEST SINGLE PARTY IN PARLIAMENT, JORGENSEN  
CONTINUES IN OFFICE AS PRIME MINISTER UNLESS  
CHALLENGED BY AN APPARENT OPPOSITION MAJORITY. HE  
WOULD THEREBY AVOID, AFTER THE ELECTIONS, THE SO-  
CALLED "QUEEN'S ROUND" OF CONSULTATIONS WITH A SERIES  
OF PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN

REQUIRED HAD THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT BEEN OVERTHROWN OR RESIGNED.

3. ALTHOUGH POPULATION GROWTH IN DENMAR IS SLOW, THE SIZE OF THE ELECTORATE FOR THE FIRST TIME HAS REACHED 3.5 MILLION. IN THE LAST (JANUARY 1975). ELECTIONS, 88 PERCENT OF THOSE ELVIBLE VOTED. THE VOTING AGE IS 20. VOTERS WHO WILL NOT BE IN DENMARK ON FEBRUARY 15 CAN CAST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT.

4. ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD ON THE SAME DAY IN GREENLAND BUT WILL NOT BE HELD IN THE FAROE ISLANDS UNTIL MARCH 1. THE RESULT OF THE FAROE VOTES, AS HAS HAPPENED ONCE IN THE PAST, COULD TIP THE BALANCE IN THE CASE OF A CLOSE OUTCOME.

5. THE DANISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM IS A PROPORTIONAL ONE BASED ON A MODIFICATION OF THE CLASSICAL D'HONDT METHOD OF DIVISION. THE 179 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT WILL BE ALLOCATED AS FOLLOWS: TWO SEATS EACH SET ASIDE FOR GREENLAND AND THE FAROE ISLANDS, FOR A TOTAL OF 4; THE REMAING 175 ARE ELECTED FROM METROPOLITAN DENMARK IN A COMPLICATED SYSTEM DESIGNED TO GIVE EACH PARTY A PROPORTION OF SEATS ROUGHTLY CORRESPONDING TO ITS PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL POPULAR VOTE.

6. IT PRESENTLY APPEARS THAT THE ELECTIONS WILL BE CONTESTED BY THE FOLLOWING PARTIES, ALL OF WHICH ARE PRESENTLY REPRESENTED IN THE FOLKETING. CONSERVATIVES, UNCLASSIFIED

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LIBERALS, PROGRESSIVES, RADICALS, CENTER DEMOCRATS, CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY, SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY, THE DANISH COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE LEFT SOCIALISTS. THE JUSTICE PARTY, WHICH WAS NOT RETURNED IN THE JANUARY 1975 ELECTIONS, WILL RUN CANDIDATES FOR SURE. A NEW PARTY, THE PENSIONERS, EXPECTS IT WILL BE ABLE TO APPEAR ON THE BALLOT. TO DO SO, HOWEVER, IT MUST GET SIGNATURES FROM AT LEAST 17,500 VOTERS BEFORE FEBRUARY 1, THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF VOTES CASE FOR EACH OF THE 175 SEATS IN THE LAST ELECTION. SO FAR, THEY HAVE COLLECTED ABOUT 15,000 SIGNATURES. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE MINIMUM OF 3-4 SEATS IN FOLKETING, A PARTY MUST OBTAIN ONLY 2 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE.

7. AN EARLIER PARLIAMENTARY DEFECTOR FROM THE CONSERVATIVES, HANS JORGEN LEMBOURN, WHO HAD LEGITIMIZED HIS DEFECTION BY REGISTERING HIMSELF AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF A NEW PARTY CHRISTENED THE MODERATES, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO GGAIN THE NECES-

SARY SIGNATURES TO PUT HIS PARTY ON THE BALLOT AND IS  
RETIRING FROM POLITICS. (A NUMBER OF PROMINENT  
PARLIAMENTARIANS WILL NOT RUN IN THE UPCOMING  
ELECTIONS, INCLUDING THE PRESENT LEADER OF THE RADICAL  
PARTY, FORMER PRIME MINISTER HILMAR BAUNSGAARD.) A  
RELATIVELY NEW, ULTRA-LEFT-WING GROUP WHICH CALLS  
ITSELF THE COMMUNIST WORKERS PARTY APPARENTLY INTENDS  
TO REMAIN AN EXTRA PARLIAMENTARY FORCE AND WILL NOT  
ATTEMPT TO GET ON THE BALLOT.  
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